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ABSTRACT

Graduate programs were developed cooperatively by several U.S. universities and the Iranian Ministry of Education in response to the critical shortage of Iranian teachers and educational administrators. A variety of administrative, logistical, academic, and cultural problems were encountered in bringing mid-career educators to the United States to participate in these programs. Specific concerns included admissions standards, housing needs, campus and community orientation, transportation, health care, academic and personal support services, and reintegration into the native culture. Foreign students who stayed for the required year of study successfully earned their master's degrees. Universities involved in exchange programs should do the following: prepare the foreign students for the experience before they leave their country, assist the student to adjust to cultural differences, relate their academic experiences to their nations' needs, and maintain close contact with the sponsoring agencies so that the participants effectively can be integrated into the educational systems of their homelands upon their return. Background information on Iranian teacher education and the exchange program is provided. (Author/SW)

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THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AMERICAN GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS FOR IRANIAN EDUCATORS

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Abstract

In response to the critical shortage of Iranian teachers and educational administrators with advanced training we designed and carried out several graduate level programs in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and several North American universities. A variety of administrative, logistical, academic, and cultural problems were encountered in bringing mid-career educators to the United States to participate in these programs. However, all those who stayed for the required year of study successfully earned their master's degrees and generally impressed their faculties with their scholastic achievement and professional commitment. We recommend that universities engaged in the bringing of foreign students to their campuses take great care in: (1) preparing them for the experience well before they leave their homes; (2) aiding with their cultural adjustment once they have arrived; (3) making their academic experiences relate clearly to their nations' needs; and (4) maintaining close contact with the sponsoring agencies so that the participants effectively can be integrated into the educational systems of their homelands upon their return.

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The rapid technological development of certain regions within the Middle East has resulted in a great demand for skilled workers, technicians, and professionals. A large percentage of children from this area grow to maturity with little formal schooling and the rate of adult illiteracy is very high. The educational systems of most of the Middle Eastern nations currently have neither sufficient facilities nor qualified personnel to train the required manpower or to educate the masses of people. Such oil-rich countries as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Iran have attempted to expand the educational opportunities of their citizens by inviting foreign agencies to establish and staff schools and by sending their most promising personnel to universities in Europe and North America. The present paper describes some of our experiences in cooperating with the Iran Ministry of Education to design and implement several graduate level education programs at universities in the United States. It is our hope that a description and analysis of these programs will give educators some insights into the complexities of international program development and serve to guide them in their own efforts.

Background

Although the predominantly Moslem nation of Iran historically has placed great value upon the acquisition of knowledge, the form of its educational system up to the time of the recent Islamic revolution largely was determined by Western nations that were engaged in corporate and military enterprises. The United States first became officially involved in Iran's educational planning with the drafting of a series of "Development Plans" beginning in 1948. The First Development Plan (1948-1954) was merely a list of projects recommended by an American engineering firm, with little input from the ministries or existing institutions that were to be affected.[1] The Second Development Plan (1955-1961), similarly lacking in guidance from the appropriate Iranian agencies, resulted in uncoordinated activity and aborted programs.[2] Subsequent Plans received ever greater input from the Council of Ministries and were carried out under the supervision of Iranian government officials. These Plans, lasting up until 1978, increasingly reflected the Iranian government's commitment to alleviating the shortage of qualified teachers and school facilities.[3]

As classrooms became available and parents were encouraged to enroll their children, the number of students at all levels increased dramatically. From the implementation of the First Development Plan to the conclusion of the Fourth, enrollments in kindergartens reportedly went from approximately 5,000 up to 20,000; in primary schools from 358,000 to 3,738,000; in secondary schools from 36,000 to 1,328,000; and in technical/vocational centers from 700 up to 50,000.[4]

Unfortunately, the corresponding demand for qualified teachers was not being met by Iran's institutions of higher learning. A UNESCO study

of teacher training colleges in Iran concluded that:

> ...their facilities were inadequate, their staffs limited and poorly prepared and their curricula extremely weak. How inadequate is the preparation of most teachers is indicated by the fact that 20 percent of all primary teachers in 1965-1966 were untrained, and 27 percent of the remainder did not possess the equivalent of a high school education.[5]

Within the Iranian Ministry of Science and Higher Education was the General Department of Teacher Training. Its Office for In-Service Training was responsible for planning and coordinating programs for the upgrading of teaching and administrative personnel of the various teacher training institutions. Beginning in the early 1970's, summer in-service programs for teachers were sponsored by the Ministry and were conducted by Iranian and foreign professors, curriculum experts, and other specialists. In-service programs also were carried out during the academic year for educational administrators ranging in rank from Ministry officials to school principals. Many were sent abroad to study at universities in France, Great Britain, and the United States.

Research was undertaken in 1975 to explore the receptivity of Iranian educators to the involvement of American universities in Iranian educational system development. It was found that they were fairly evenly split in their attitudes as to the extent to which Iranian teacher training programs should remain independent of Western influence (see Table 1). The most frequently selected comments clearly reflected the differences of opinion: (1) "Having cooperation with Western countries and using their

methods that are feasible to Iran's system of education is useful, but a complete imitation is disasterous." (22 of 71 responding); and (2) "Because of geographical and cultural differences, being influenced by a Western education would not be feasible in Iran." (27 of 71 responding).[6]

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

A far greater number of these same respondents were willing to grant that Iranian teacher and administrative training programs would experience at least some improvement as a result of involvement with American universities (see Table 2). The most frequently selected response from among those provided was: "To accept the methods that are not contradictory to our life style and culture would be useful." (19 of 53 responding). The second most frequent choice supported a far more optimistic view: "Having such cooperation with an American university is very useful in learning new methods and in bettering our teacher training system." (15 of 53 responding).[7]

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

This research clearly revealed a wide range of disagreement among Iranian educators about how their nation's severe shortage of skilled teachers could best be alleviated. Yet, it also revealed a solid base of support for input from American universities--as long as such input did not conflict with Iranian cultural values and customs. Our challenge, therefore, was to design a program that would expose Iranian teachers to

the most sound theory and practice currently available and would give them opportunities to discuss, analyze, and criticize these views and modify them as necessary to relate better to the realities of teaching in Iran.

The Iranian Teacher Education Program (1977-1978)

The details of our first program were hammered out over a period of several months in meetings with university and Ministry of Education personnel. General university and departmental regulations had to be met in the initial drafting of the program proposal. Also, components had to be included that would clearly serve the interests of Iran.

Early contacts with Ministry officials revealed that they were particularly interested in a one-year duration master's degree program abroad for their teacher educators. Unfortunately, they already had been approached by so many foreign agencies and had seen so many program failures that an atmosphere of skepticism and distrust pervaded our initial interactions. It was only after we had made several trips to speak personally with Ministry officials and had revised the program proposal to better reflect their interests that agreement was reached to launch what was to be known as the "Iranian Staff Development Program" in the fall of 1977. Details of the official Memorandum of Agreement were worked out and negotiated cooperatively among university staff, the Academic Vice Minister, the Director of Teacher Training, and the Vice Minister of Finance. We celebrated the signing of the contract thinking the major difficulties had been overcome.

Our first rude awakening came when we discovered that there was very little correspondence between the criteria used by the Ministry to select

program participants and our university's admission requirements. The Ministry wanted to select a sample of its most promising employees from each of the provinces within Iran. It wanted people who had many years of teaching experience yet were not near retirement age; who had never before studied abroad; and who had distinguished themselves in their professional dedication and performance. Our university wanted a score of 550 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and a four-year bachelors degree from an "acceptable" institution with a minimum grade point average of 2.5 ("B-"). Most of the candidates being considered by the Ministry had attended college during the time when three-year degrees were being awarded and grading was on a 20 point scale, 10 being a "pass" and scores above 13 given only to exceptional students.

The Ministry proceeded with the screening of up to three times the number of candidates that would be selected to represent each province. The Ministry then arranged for all of these applicants to be tested and interviewed for three days in Tehran. We reviewed the files of each of the more than 75 applicants and participated in the interviews along with the Director of Teacher Training, the Director of International Studies, two teachers, and one official from the Office of Scholarships. The Ministry officials had their own criteria for selecting candidates and refused to take seriously those of our university. Considerable friction arose when we objected to the consideration of applicants highly regarded by the Ministry who happened to have graduated 15 years earlier from "group III" Iranian colleges.

Twenty-five compromise candidates were selected for participation in this first-year program. Their completed application forms and translated

transcripts were left in our hands for delivery to the university office of international admissions. In order to secure admission of borderline cases we prepared lists of their post-baccalaureate academic studies, professional accomplishments, letters of recommendation, and publications. Many, many meetings were called and memos exchanged among the various university offices before the admission of all 25 was secured.

The midnight arrival of our first group of 25 Iranian educators (some with wives and children) marked the beginning of an ordeal the magnitude of which we had greatly underestimated. In order to stay within the housing allowance granted each student by the Ministry, we had rented thirteen one bedroom apartments for them to share. We had discouraged the bringing of families until those who intended to do so could make their own living arrangements. The unexpected arrival of children necessitated some swift adjustments over the strong objections of apartment managers.

All of the difficulties that we were to encounter in the course of the coming year were foreshadowed in that first night. It was three a.m. for us, but mid-afternoon for them. They wanted to know everything about everything immediately. Is the water safe to drink? Why aren't all the apartments exactly the same? This was not the rich America they had long heard about. But this, we explained, was the way American students lived. Culture shock persisted for many months as the students were confronted with apparently arbitrary regulations, strange forms to fill out, and very impatient office personnel. In addition, homesickness and social isolation dampened their spirits. Our meager staff was hard-pressed to fill every logistical, cultural, personal, and social need.

The one-year academic program we designed included a broad range of

courses that we felt would prove most interesting, informative, and useful to Iranian teachers. For foundations courses we selected the philosophy of education and comparative/international education. To make these more relevant to the Iranian educators we included sections on Islam and Sufism in the former and comparative analyses of Western and Middle Eastern systems of education in the latter. Other core courses included educational psychology, instructional design technology, and a survey of current teaching methods commonly used in the United States. The program participants also were required to take one course in the teaching of their specialized subject area and an elective in either administration, curriculum, or instructional media.

A second major component of the program was participation in field observations of a broad range of schools and listening to guest speakers from various educational agencies. The students were able to interact with school personnel and view many varied approaches to teaching. They were required to write reports on their findings and to discuss promising applications to Iran in class.

The final program component was directed research for the master's project. Here the participants were introduced to modes of educational research about which they generally were unfamiliar. They were guided in the selection of a paper topic, in the search for relevant literature, in the collection of data, and in the organized written presentation of the information they managed to acquire. Each student was encouraged to consider problems actually encountered in their jobs back home and to propose and research solutions to these problems.[8]

A comprehensive evaluation of all aspects of the 1977-1978 Iranian

Teacher Education Program would go far beyond the scope of the present paper. Educators who are interested in the details of particular aspects are invited to write letters of inquiry. We collected subjective evaluations and grades for each student from participating faculty members. Let us look at a sample of the results.

Despite all the fuss raised about "B.A. degree equivalency" and "English language proficiency," each and every one of the Iranian educators fulfilled the requirements for the master's degree within the time allotted. Table 3 shows that there was very little difference between the overall program grade point averages (GPA's) of those admitted with: (1) a three-year licentiate; (2) one year of teacher training prior to the three-year licentiate; (3) a three-year licentiate plus one year in a post-licentiate teacher training program; and (4) a four-year licentiate degree. Indeed, the only three students with GPA's of 4.00 were in group (1) and the student with the lowest GPA (3.14 with the only "C" grade given) was in group (4).[9]

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Our university provided an English language screening test and divided the students into five groups on the basis of their measured performance on a variety of written and oral tests. What we shall refer to as group I ordinarily would not be allowed to register in any academic course work and group V would not have any restrictions placed on their academic program. Those rated at the group II level would be allowed to register for just one academic course in addition to formal language in-

struction; group III for two courses, and so on. Table 4 reveals that there was a negligible relationship between placement and GPA earned during the graduate program.

INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

Our findings on the absence of a clear relation between measured language proficiency and overall GPA corroborates those of a far more extensive study that was undertaken at West Virginia University. This earlier research covered a 10 year period (1964 to 1974) and examined the performance of over 200 foreign students in several different academic majors. No significant correlations were found between TOEFL scores and graduate level GPA's--not even among students who failed to complete the requirements for their desired degree.[10]

Language proficiency apparently does not relate to graduate level GPA. However, interviews with the students revealed that nearly everyone encountered considerable difficulty in understanding lectures and assignments and in reading their textbooks. Fortunately, under our counsel, the professors learned to slow down their presentations, use fewer idioms, and allow more time for responding to questions. Students were allowed short periods of time to discuss important points among themselves in Farsi and also tape recorded class sessions for later review. Textbook readings were handled by having study groups work on separate sections, translating unfamiliar terms in the margins, and then sharing their interpretations with each other. Fourteen of the students who were rated lowest in English proficiency were given 16 hours per week of formal English language training.

At least four hours of this time each week was spent on answering technical questions that the students had about their academic coursework. The six students in this group who took the TOEFL in December and again in April gained an average of 45 points during those few months (from 434 up to 479).

At our request, each participating faculty member prepared a written report summarizing various aspects of the Iranian educators' academic performance in his or her course. The evaluations were quite consistently favorable. For example, one professor stated that, "I found the students to be experienced in teacher education, talented in their various academic fields, hard working, intelligent, and interested in the course." Another claimed that they were: "...enthusiastic, eager to participate, and grateful for the additional contact after class." A third observed that: "Because these people sacrificed a great deal to come here, and were aware of the import of their selection, they were most dedicated and attentive students and gave every lesson and activity their best effort." Some mention was made of the English language deficiencies, but significant improvement in comprehension and composition was noted during the course of the year.

We had stressed to faculty members the importance of relating course assignments to the professional interests and needs of their Iranian students. We were pleased to learn of their efforts toward this end. Students specializing in the teaching of English as a second language were required to present to the class a selection of books, pictures, audiovisual materials, games, and other teaching aids that were representative of American culture and also acceptable and useful in their Iranian classrooms. In another course the students were divided into small groups and

challenged to develop and justify a list of teaching skills that they would want to use in their practice back home. One professor noted that, after a slow start, his students became "...quick to ask perceptive questions, make comparisons, and see possibilities of taking back the educational theory and practice they had learned to Iran." Almost every participating faculty member expressed the belief that the Iranian educators could and would use the knowledge they had gained upon their return home. One summed up his evaluation of the program as follows:

> They are serious professional educators, concerned about improving education in Iran and dedicated to returning to their country to continue working for its development goals. These are the kinds of people we should be trying to reach--and more importantly they are the kinds of people the government of Iran should be trying to upgrade.

Considering how much extra time and effort the professors tended to invest in teaching their courses, we were pleasantly surprised that so many of them expressed very positive attitudes about their experiences. One reported that: "I have found genuine satisfaction in working with such a fine, dedicated group of educators." Another wrote: "It was a very rewarding experience to be involved with this thoroughly experienced, professional, and most courteous group of teachers from Iran." Others stated that it was as much a learning experience for them as for the students.

Since formal reports tend to accent the most favorable results and impressions, we shall qualify the preceding with a few of the reservations expressed in private interviews with faculty and students. We noted that

many professors generalized too quickly about the virtues and accomplishments of the group. Actually, a minority of the Iranians carried on most of the discussions--often with more intensity than found in a typical class --and completed more than their share of group projects. Like any other group of students, some were highly motivated while others did just the bare minimum to pass. One of the most gifted students spent much of his time striking up conversations in the cafeteria and traveling about the States. He missed many classes and settled for the "B" grades. Most of the faculty expressed great concern about the low level of written English, but decided not to fail anyone on this ground alone. Some felt that our obligation was to offer these in-service professionals the best knowledge and techniques we have so that at least a small measure of improvement would be made in their teaching performance. Yet, it was necessary to ensure that the students were not being given credit for courses without having fulfilled certain minimum requirements. This necessitated greater than usual reliance on the more subjective methods of evaluation such as judging the quality of class discussions, essay examinations, written reports, and interviews.

The best students were highly critical of professors who failed to grade assignments carefully and who gave inadequate recognition for the extra efforts they made as individuals. One professor who relied entirely upon objective exams to assign grades, yet allowed the students to seek clarification from peers speaking in Farsi, was highly criticized by some of the most outstanding students because the others who, in their view, were cheating received scores as good or better than theirs. Indeed, the class performance under these conditions was so high that anyone with less

than 95 percent correct was given a grade of "B." The best students, who labored hard to write their term papers unaided, complained because papers that (according to them) had been professionally edited or copied from texts largely verbatim received higher marks. It was their contention that professors ought to have been able to distinguish between the honest efforts of speakers of English as a second language and published material.

Finally, in contrast with the optimism expressed by faculty about applications of knowledge gained to Iran, some students felt that the rigid bureaucratic structure of their country's educational system would make it very difficult for them to put even what they considered to be good ideas into practice. Supervisors, they said, were suspicious of innovation and the centrally administered financing was hard to get. In order to maintain high levels of motivation, the students needed assurance from the Ministry that upon their return they would be granted opportunities to put their new-found knowledge into practice without the usual high level of resistance. Toward this end we kept the Ministry well informed about the students' academic accomplishments and arranged for the Vice Minister of Education to come to the United States in order to discuss with the students their immediate concerns including their future positions within the Iranian educational system.

Program Expansion and Diversification (1978-1979)

In fulfillment of the terms of the Memorandum of Agreement for the 1977-1978 Iranian Teacher Education Program we provided the Ministry of Education with a series of progress reports. As part of the Ministry's own monitoring strategy, each of the students was required to fill out

and return its own program evaluation forms. Also, the Vice Minister of Education was able to meet with university officials and students to better assess the program's value first hand. Clearly impressed with the feedback received, the Ministry decided to approve expansion of the program both in terms of number of participants and academic/professional specialties.

We met with Ministry officials in order to determine the most critical areas of need within the rapidly expanding Iranian system of education. They had expressed strong interest in continuing the program in teacher education and in adding the areas of educational planning and educational administration. Planners were those Ministry personnel who made policy and curriculum decisions in the provincial offices and administrators were principals of primary and secondary schools. We prepared a general program proposal covering all three specialties and it was approved for up to 120 participants.

Based upon our previous experience we knew that no one university could provide a program of high quality with adequate counseling and logistical support to such a large group of students. Also, the Ministry very strongly requested that admission be secured for every one of the candidates that met its criteria. After gaining approval and strong encouragement from the Vice Minister of Education, we set out to find about six universities--each of which would be willing to admit 10-30 foreign students into their master's degree program. The institutions we finally decided upon were selected on the basis of: (1) the academic reputation of their education departments; (2) their ability and willingness to provide graduate degree programs that would relate to the needs and interests

of Iranian educators; (3) their approval of the terms of the Memorandum of Agreement; (4) their acceptance--on probationary standing--of some applicants with three-year licentiate degrees and marginal English language exam scores; and (5) their rate of tuition within the limits set by the Ministry budget.

Our specific responsibilities outlined in the Memoranda of Agreement between the Ministry and each of the participating universities were as follows:

a. assist in the admission of Ministry selected applicants;
b. assist each university in the planning and implementation of a master's degree program appropriate to the needs of education in Iran;
c. provide guidance to each university relative to the participating Iranian educators' cultural, academic, and logistical adjustment; and
d. evaluate each university's program triannually and report the results to the Ministry.

By monitoring the performance of contractual obligations, by providing guidance to the students and university faculty, and by maintaining close communication with the Ministry, we intended to ensure that the Ministry's investment of funds, and the students' investment of precious mid-career time would best serve the Iranian national system of education.

We have prepared a separate report on the specific outcomes of our 1978-1979 program, but shall mention just a few highlights in the present paper. We were successful in consumating contract negotiations at six universities and in placing all of the educators submitted by the Ministry

for admissions consideration. On the basis of our recommendations the Ministry approved a two month long intensive English language training program in the United States for all of the participants to complete prior to beginning their academic programs. As expected, the students required considerable assistance in finding suitable housing, locating facilities, securing transportation, and adjusting to the culture. The staff members at each university spent many hours of their own time assisting those in need, planning extracurricular activities, and sharing their homes. Many close friends were made between university personnel and the Iranian educators.

The students underwent the usual traumas entailed in being uprooted in mid-career and sent to a very strange land. But nothing was usual about the political upheaval taking place in their nation. Media coverage of events in Iran was inadequate and, in their view, highly distorted. Mail service stopped, it became difficult to get through to families back home by phone, and the banks closed. The students' personal and professional futures became uncertain as did the continuation of the only half paid for master's degree program itself.

Our intercommunication function became one of critical importance as the students suffered increasing tension and university officials needed assurance that the second half budget payment would be made by the Ministry. The crisis stage passed with the return to Iran of the previously exiled Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and the end of bloodshed in the streets. The new Ministry officials reviewed our program proposal and the two progress reports we had sent earlier. We pressed for a firm and immediate decision to continue or cancel the program on behalf of students

and universities alike who had run out of money and patience. The decision of the Ministry was to honor all six contracts. The 88 students who remained to the end of their program successfully completed all master's degree requirements.[11] All but a very few looked forward to returning to their beloved homeland to take active roles in its reconstruction.

Recommendations

Much already has been written about ways to ensure the success of educational programs for Middle Eastern students studying in the United States. Common suggestions include carefully preparing students before they depart from their home nations and setting the arrival time early enough to allow for adequate orientation and academic advisement before their formal studies begin.[12] In this final section we concentrate upon just a few issues that arose in our administration of programs for large groups of Iranian educators sponsored by their government--admissions, academic program, logistics, communication, and reintegration into their native culture.

Admissions: A recent article posed the question, "Can Colleges Keep Their Integrity as Times Get Harder?" The author maintained that many American institutions of higher learning were compromising their admission standards in order to maintain enrollments during the present period of decline. He criticized the admission of students with "inadequate" undergraduate preparation and low levels of English language proficiency.[13] The negative impact of lenient admission policies on the international reputation of American universities and on the foreign students themselves was perceptively discussed in an American Friends of the Middle East pub-

lication over two decades ago. The author pointed out that the admission of students here who were not acceptable to colleges within their own nations led to a loss of respect for American institutions and a devaluation of the degrees granted as judged by officials back home. He strongly recommended that, "No foreign student who has not been a superior student in his own country ever be admitted--he will have plenty of handicaps to face here, without adding mediocre or low ability."[14]

We share the long expressed and widespread concern for the erosion of university admission standards. However, we believe that these standards need to be re-examined and kept moderately flexible in view of their inability to predict reliably academic performance. Certain important questions arose in our experience that led us to this conclusion. For example, should a practicing teacher with ten years of experience be denied admission to a program specifically designed for in-service teacher education on the sole basis of having completed just three years of formal college work? And how do just average grades from a foreign institution that admits only the clearly gifted students in the nation compare with a "B" average from American colleges that have the capacity to admit about half of all high school graduates who have worked within a system that commonly considers "C" grades to be failing? Also, English language proficiency clearly is of critical importance, but should we demand certain minimal scores on standardized tests that consistently fail to correllate with academic performance?

Most of the Middle Eastern education officials with whom we have spoken are offended by rigid university admission standards and the apparently unfounded negative evaluations of their higher education institutions.

Ministry personnel face a great loss of credibility when they are unsuccessful in placing clearly promising candidates. Applicants must endure the stigma of rejection in the eyes of their professors and supervisors who supplied letters of recommendation and shame before their families and friends. The potential loss of face is so critical a concern that universities with rigid admission standards are simply blacklisted.

Once again, we do not recommend a wholesale abandonment of formal admission standards. However, a school of education especially may be able to justify the taking of some admissions risks. For example, it can reasonably argue for the special admission of students in the interest of cultural diversity and to learn first hand how those from a variety of backrounds perform in comparison with other students more clearly admissible.[15] The success or failure of these students can be used to guide future admission decisions. Further, a professional school can justify the admission of groups of students for advanced training in their specialty fields--particularly when special classes, experiences, and tutors are provided to ensure the value of the program for the participants as well as the maintenance of academic standards. Such a school needs to develop its own rationale and justification for admissions so that it can make sound decisions and defend these, when called upon to do so, before the university administration.

Academic Program: The sequence of courses and field experiences planned for any particular group of students must be worked out in cooperation with the academic departments and the sponsoring agency. We will make just a few general recommendations here. First, because of the unique interests and background of a group of students from one particular country,

it is advisable to set up some courses for them alone. Here, the professor can spend extra time going over unfamiliar vocabulary without boring American students. Second, the professors must make special efforts to draw connections between the course content and its potential applications in the students' homeland. The course might have to be modified to avoid such local issues as busing and recent court decisions affecting school financing that have limited relevance to the foreign student. Third, at least a portion of the program ought to be devoted to discussions with the students about how they might effect change within their own cultural context.

Finally, we have to design programs that are challenging and fulfilling. Too often, dedicated students go unrewarded while others receive the same grades and degrees by doing the bare minimum of work. We have had to advise professors that a wide range of talent and motivation exists within groups of foreign students just as in the case of Americans. You cannot correctly generalize on the basis of 10 out of a group of 25 who impress you with their knowledge and articulation. The vintage AMIDEAST report we cited earlier noted that foreign students return home with American degrees bragging about how little effort was required. It claimed that their subsequent poor work performance confirmed how little they had learned. This does not necessarily imply that American institutions are inferior. Instead, a very well-intended, but unfortunate, double standard may tend to be applied. One foreign education official was quoted in the report as saying:

> You Americans are too kindhearted and too afraid that if you give a foreign student a low grade you may hurt his feelings and do harm to the cause of international

> understanding. Therefore, in many cases you do not require the same standard of achievement from foreign students that you require of your own American students. In the long run this does great harm.[16]

Our arguments for being flexible in the admission of certain groups of foreign students do not apply to the reduction of academic standards. The integrity of each university depends upon professors seeing to it that the standards they have set for performance in their classes be met equally well by all of their students.

Logistics: Foreign students arrive on your campus with a variety of concerns which require your attention. The most immediate and pressing one is housing. We tried to get information far in advance on what the housing requirements of our students would be, but few people want to commit themselves before they have had a chance to look around for themselves. Ideally, the university can reserve sufficient units to house all of the students and their families upon arrival. Those who choose to bring their families at the last minute should be prepared to pay hotel rates until they can be assisted in locating accomodations that suit their tastes and budgets. We have found that older students very much dislike living under crowded dormitory type conditions. Also, the general environment of the typical student apartment complex, with its noise and activity, is not conducive to serious study. Most mature students we questioned prefer to live alone in bachelor units off-campus where they can mingle with mature Americans yet maintain privacy and quiet when desired.

Students also need some direction and assistance with such things as campus and community orientation, transportation, and health care. As the

year progresses, they will be looking for opportunities to interact socially with Americans and to travel to places of interest locally and across the United States. To handle these matters effectively for large groups of foreign students it is necessary to hire additional university staff. Fortunately, sponsoring agencies typically are willing to supply the required funds when presented with a good program proposal. Special attention given to the many and varied human needs of these students will contribute tremendously to the success of the entire educational experience and ensure the fruitful expansion of each university's international program.

The deepest level of cultural exchange best takes place when foreign students develop friendships with their American classmates and neighbors or are invited to live with host families. Unfortunately, friends and host families are not so easily found. The students are best encouraged to make social contacts on their own by speaking with classmates and by joining university organizations. Our middle-aged educators had considerable difficulty finding friends since most of the students living on or near campus were undergraduates with very little interest in socializing with the older folks. And most of the graduate level Americans were married, employed, and lived far from campus. The universities with whom we worked responded to the Iranian educators' social isolation by putting on dinners and picnics for the students, faculty, and their families. Also, several faculty members and a few host families were glad to have small groups come to their homes for an afternoon barbecue or a holiday dinner. Staff time devoted to developing and maintaining reliable American hosts is very well spent.

Communication: It is essential that the lines of communication be clear and open among students, faculty, university administration, and the sponsoring agency throughout the duration of the program. This is best accomplished by appointing a program director--ideally one who is familiar with the students' language and culture. The director and her or his staff should keep the students informed of campus procedures, regulations, and events. They provide students with academic, logistical, and social counseling or refer them to the appropriate campus officials or off-campus agencies. The director's office also serves as the communications and information center where all of the various university personnel (admissions, immigration, housing, health, contracts, finance, registrar, academic departments, dean, etc.) can seek clarification of issues and resolution of problems that they inevitably encounter.

The program director should be responsible for the communication of student concerns and achievements to the university and sponsoring agency. The students need to be encouraged to express their views without fear of reprisal. It should become clearly apparent to them during the course of their stay that the university is vitally concerned about their welfare and is responsive to their needs. Those foreign students who have left their secure homes and professional positions to study here especially need assurance that the sacrifices they make will be appreciated and the competencies they acquire will find productive application when they return to their homelands. Since their positions commonly are filled during their absence, they rightfully desire a clear conception of what place they will be called upon to take when they return. The program director can best ensure the students' future productive employment by keeping the

sponsoring agency informed of their achievements.

We have found that sponsoring officials underestimate the insecurity and tension of the students they send. By successfully communicating these student concerns to them we were able to increase the officials' consciousness of the need to keep in touch with their students and to prepare for their eventual return. The Vice Minister's visit that we arranged did much to allay the students' anxiety and to enhance their perception of the value and relevance of the program to their future roles in their nation's educational system. The first year program was further reinforced by a Ministry sponsored workshop in Great Britain that the students attended after completing their studies in America. Participants in the 1978-1979 program received official letters of congratulation and encouragement from the Ministry, but further action was interupted by the revolution.

Reintegration into Native Culture: Some attention has been paid to the problems encountered by foreign students returning to their homelands. One American professor who taught in Saudi Arabia for several years reported that most of the returning scholars who had earned their doctorates abroad held the view that they were going to transform their nation into an industrial utopia and out of cultural backwardness. Faced with the reality of their powerlessness they underwent a period of "reverse culture shock."[17] This problem is addressed in another article which asked rhetorically, "Can they go home again?"[18] Things change during a student's prolonged absence. The student himself may tend to lose touch with his culture and sometimes becomes so critical that he finds it difficult to work within the traditional system. Clearly, we have to be concerned about the productive reintegration of foreign students back into their na-

tive environment.

The key to avoiding reverse culture shock with its negative impact upon further cooperative international program development is to keep the students in close contact with their home countries. Faculty can contribute by encouraging and assisting them to relate their studies to the solution of existing educational system problems back home. Program directors and university officials can develop close working relationships with sponsoring agencies. Students who remain abroad for longer than one year should make extended visits to their homes during the summer recess both to reinforce their cultural ties and to keep in touch with the educational agencies that might employ them in the future. Reorientation seminars for students who have completed an extended period of study and are preparing to return home may serve to better enable them to take advantage of the opportunities ahead. If they are fortunate, a tailor-made position will be awaiting their arrival. Most will have to knock on a lot of doors before finding a job for which they are best suited. All must be made to realize that credence will not be given to their innovative views until they have demonstrated their competence in working within the existing system.

We have learned much in these past two years beyond what is presented in this brief report and are applying that knowledge to the development of new educational programs in cooperation with officials in the Middle East and Africa. The demand for educational system and staff development is very great in these regions, but the competition among universities for students is growing rapidly. Foreign officials are looking for well designed programs in higher education that clearly will serve the needs of

their ever more demanding populace. Ministers of Education increasingly will be held accountable for the funds expended abroad. We hope that the insights and guidelines we have presented here will enable interested universities to provide more professionally and personally fulfilling educational opportunities for the people of nations seeking to establish such mutually beneficial ties.

TABLE 1

THE DEGREE THAT IRANIAN TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS SHOULD REMAIN INDEPENDENT FROM WESTERN INFLUENCE

Response	Number (N=96)	Percent of N
Completely dependent	5	5
Somewhat dependent	40	42
Somewhat independent	33	34
Completely independent	14	15
No response	4	4

TABLE 2

ANTICIPATED IMPROVEMENT OF THE IRANIAN TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATIVE TRAINING PROGRAMS AS A RESULT OF INVOLVEMENT WITH AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

Response	Number (N=96)	Percent of N
No improvement	3	3
Slight improvement	14	15
Some improvement	57	59
Vast improvement	15	16
No response	7	7

TABLE 3

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TYPE OF COLLEGE PREPARATION
AND GRADUATE PROGRAM GRADE POINT AVERAGE

College Preparation	Number (N=25)	Average GPA
3 year licentiate	9	3.65
1 year plus 3	8	3.80
3 years plus 1	3	3.72
4 year licentiate	5	3.62

TABLE 4

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RATED ENGLISH LANGUAGE
PROFICIENCY AND GRADUATE PROGRAM GRADE POINT AVERAGE

English Proficiency Rating	Number (N=25)	Average GPA
I. Lowest level	4	3.73
II.	8	3.61
III.	3	3.67
IV.	6	3.79
V. Highest level	4	3.77

Footnotes

[1]Joseph S. Szylimicz, Education and Modernization in the Middle East (London: Cornell University Press, 1973), p. 391.

[2]Harvey H. Smith, et al., Outline of the Third Plan (1962-1968) (Tehran, Iran: Sazeman-I-Barnameh, 1966), pp. 8-17.

[3]Ibid., pp. 31-42; and Harvey H. Smith, et al., Iran's Fifth Development Plan, 1973-78: A Summary (Tehran, Iran: Sazeman-I-Barnameh, 1973), pp. 121-6.

[4]Shahpour Rassekk, "Planning for Social Change in Iran Since 1960," in A Report on the Conference on Iran in the 1960's: A Consideration of the Position and Prospects (New York: Columbia University, Middle East Institute, November, 1968), p. 9.

[5]Szylimicz, Education and Modernization in the Middle East, op. cit., p. 400. A survey and description of the various types of teacher training institutions in Iran is provided in Harvey H. Smith, et al., Teacher Training in Iran (Tehran, Iran: Ministry of Education, 1972).

[6]Mahroo Navai Mostafavi-Kashani, "Education and Teacher Training in Iran: Problems and Prospects" (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1975): 117, 157.

[7]Ibid., 118, 159.

[8]To meet the distinctive needs and interests of the Iranian educators special sessions of the regularly scheduled core courses were set up. However, they selected their specialty and elective courses from those open to all School of Education graduate students.

[9]Excluding this one student the GPA for group IV was 3.74. Since there were no clear trends we did not perform more rigorous statistical analyses.

[10]See Helga R. Shay and M. S. Tseng, "Language Proficiency and Aptitude as Determinants of Academic Performance of Foreign Students in Graduate School" (unpublished paper, Center for Extension and Continuing Education, University of West Virginia, Weston, WV 26452, circa 1975).

[11]Just five students dropped out for personal reasons during the first month of the program.

[12]For example see Ali Jarrahi-Zadeh and William J. Eichman, "The Impact of Sociocultural Factors on Middle-Eastern Students in the U. S.," International Educational and Cultural Exchange 5 (Winter, 1970): 82-94; A. R. Hagey and Joan Hagey, "Meeting the Needs of Students from Other Cultures," Improving College and University Teaching 22 (Winter, 1974): 42-4; Leonard H. Marks, William French Smith, and William E. Weld, Jr., "Notes on U. S.--Middle East Exchanges," International Educational and Cultural Exchange 12 (Spring, 1977): 18-20; Orin D. Parker and Educational Services Staff, AFME, "Cultural Clues to the Middle Eastern Student," International Educational and Cultural Exchange 12 (Fall, 1976): 12-5, 18; and Mohammad Alam Payind, "Academic, Personal and Social Problems of Afghan and Iranian Students in the United States," The Educational Research Quarterly 4 (Summer, 1979): 3-11.

[13]Malcolm G. Scully, "Can Colleges Keep Their Integrity as Times Get Harder?" The Chronicle of Higher Education 18 (9 April, 1979): 3-4.

[14]Ivan Putman, Jr., Educational Observations in the Middle East (American

Friends of the Middle East, circa 1956), p. 7.

[15]See Alan W. Johnson and James R. Gotcher, "A Priorities System for Admitting International Students," International Educational and Cultural Exchange 13 (Spring, 1978): 41-6. These authors similarly argue that a university's achievement of cultural diversity should be a factor in the admission of foreign students, but only until their percentage of the total student population reaches about 6%.

[16]Putman, Educational Observations in the Middle East, op. cit., p. 8.

[17]James R. Corey, "Cultural Shock in Reverse," The Chronicle of Higher Education 18 (9 April, 1979): 48.

[18]Richard W. Brislin and H. Van Buren, IV, "Can They Go Home Again?" International Educational and Cultural Exchange 9 (Spring, 1974): 19-24.